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ABSTRACT

Primary goals of the SWRL English Language and Concepts Program for Spanish-Speaking Children (LCS) are to teach Spanish-speaking children to communicate effectively in oral English language skills. An increasing amount of attention is given to the development of skills that prepare the children for future reading and writing in mathematics, science, and social studies. An important objective in the development of LCS has been to develop instructional and assessment procedures that will help integrate the program into extant bicultural, bilingual programs that will strengthen and extend the Hispanic cultural characteristics. During the five tryouts of LCS, the instructional, training and assessment systems of the LCS program have been developed and tested. In the early tryouts, the program format was in the developmental stage. In the last three, the components covering all 15 units were available for the year-long tryouts. Schools were selected to represent various demographic situations. A total of 7,100 children, ranging from kindergarten to grade 8, have been involved. Teacher comments, observation reports, and assessment scores were used as data sources. (Author/KM)

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THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF THE SWRL ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND CONCEPTS PROGRAM FOR SPANISH-SPEAKING CHILDREN

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THE SWRL ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND CONCEPTS PROGRAM FOR SPANISH-SPEAKING CHILDREN (LCS)

Program Goals: Primary goals of the SWRL English Language and Concepts Program for Spanish-Speaking Children (LCS) are to teach Spanish-speaking children to communicate effectively in oral English language skills. An increasing amount of attention is given to the development of skills that prepare the children for future reading and writing in the subject matter areas of mathematics, science, and social studies. An important objective in the development of LCS has been to develop instructional and assessment procedures that will help integrate the program into extant bicultural, bilingual programs that will strengthen and extend the Hispanic cultural characteristics.

Program Procedures: The Program consists of 225 daily lessons and accompanying follow-up materials. Organization of the Program into 15-lesson units allows for planning flexibility. At the end of each unit an assessment and review lesson is presented. Approximately 50 minutes of instruction are included in each lesson. As many lessons are presented per day as is consistent with the pacing requirements of the class.

Classroom instruction centers on situations that encourage communication between teacher and learner and between learner and learner. Further practice is provided either by student tutors or adult aides on a one-to-one basis, or by the teacher on a small group basis, at the teacher's option.

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Language is used in a setting that gives the pupil many opportunities to use syntactic and vocabulary items that present problems. The sequence of lessons emphasizes the interrelationships of syntactic structures. Each objective is presented in the context of previously-learned material.

Materials Provided:

1. A Placement Aid helps determine which pupils will profit from the Program. This test is also used as a guide for placement of students within the Program.
2. Individual Lesson Cards state the language skills being taught and the teaching procedures to be used. Each lesson also contains a list of needed materials.
3. Practice Exercises are the basic materials to be used in conducting the LCS follow-up practice. They are designed to facilitate easy use by a student tutor or aide in working with individual students or small groups of children, and emphasize the newly-learned language skills.
4. The Assessment Cards are used at the end of each 15-lesson unit to check the proficiency of each pupil to comprehend and produce the language structures included in the unit. Review cards provide additional practice if required.
5. Each 15 lesson unit includes a Dialog Practice Exercise to be administered either before or after the assessment. The Dialog Practice Exercise includes content from previous LCS units and

provides structured dialog contexts designed to strengthen conversational use of English language and concepts. A Dialog Practice Review provides further structured practice for those pupils who need it.

6. An End of Program Assessment is provided to evaluate the achievement level of each child in the English language and concept skills presented in the Program.
7. Teacher and Tutor-Aid Training Materials accompany the LCS Program. These include a ten minute movie, film strips, and tapes that serve to explain in detail the specific teaching and tutorial procedures found to be most beneficial in presenting the LCS lesson. A manual, to be used by the teacher in training either tutors or aides, provides information on scheduling and guides her through complete training sessions for both groups.
8. Concept Cards, Concept Posters and other visuals are used to present language concepts.

DATA SOURCE

Tryouts: During the five tryouts of LCS, the instructional, training and assessment systems of the LCS program have been developed and tested. In the early tryouts, the program format was in the developmental stage. In the last three tryouts the components covering all 15 units were available for the year-long tryouts. Schools were selected to represent various demographic situations: schools in a large Spanish-speaking community, schools in the inner city, schools in pocket areas surrounded

by English speaking communities, and in country schools serving migrant families. During the last tryouts the program was not closely monitored by the Laboratory. Users received and presented the LCS instructional program and the accompanying training system with minimal Laboratory assistance so as to simulate performance as it would be outside of tryout circumstances. A total of 7,100 children, ranging from kindergarten to grade 8, have been involved in the tryouts. Ages of the children ranged from 4 to 13 years of age. The largest portion of entering pupils were five and six years old. Teacher comments, observation reports, and assessment scores were used as data sources.

ASSESSMENTS IN THE LCS PROGRAM

Development of the Assessment System: At the initial stages of designing the assessments, certain general procedures were recognized as being indispensable. The children were to demonstrate by their performance the comprehension of concepts, ability to answer different types of questions with acceptable phrases, and to produce complete sentence responses. Each assessment to be used in an individually administered context by the teacher was to take 5-10 minutes to administer and score. Real objects, posters, flashcards and the use of a puppet were to be used in establishing communication contexts to elicit desired responses.

During the tryouts various format procedures were refined. A section was added to the Placement Aid and End of Program Assessment in which situational contexts made it necessary for children to produce simple and complex sentences. The Placement Aid has been used to identify

children who needed LCS instruction. For those students selected entry points and procedures were established.

During the initial tryout an assessment was included at the end of each lesson. The teachers objected to the daily assessment claiming that it took too much from classroom time. The teachers felt that the assessment was not needed, for the learner-learner activity made apparent how well the children had mastered the objectives of the lesson. Additionally, the assessment activity was not followed by review activities; therefore, it made no provision for remediation. The daily assessment activity was eliminated and the teachers commented that by its deletion the program was improved.

The unit assessment procedures were revised during the tryout period. Initially children who scored less than 60 percent of the total score received review instruction based on the ten item assessment following each fifteen lesson unit. The review procedures were refined. Students who answer any of the questions incorrectly receive additional instruction and review based on those items.

LCS Assessment Instruments: The built-in Assessment instruments contain items which assess various language performance skill areas.

1. Concept identification - a simple recognition of an English concept by the pupil, e.g.

   Point to the two shapes that are equal in size.

2. Concept statement - a more complex behavior requiring the pupil not only to recognize but also to produce the appropriate words or phrases to communicate an understanding of concepts, e.g.

Do you see more horses or more dogs?

Minimal answer: more dogs.

3. Language production - the production of sentences involving simple and complex transformations, e.g.

Response is embedded in the request:

A. CONTEXT: Ellie, a puppet, has a pencil.

B. REQUEST: Ellie thinks the pencil is short. Tell Ellie IT IS LONG.

C. RESPONSE: [IT IS / IT'S / THE PENCIL IS] LONG.

D. REINFORCEMENT: Thank you.

Response calls for permutation and morphological processes:

A. CONTEXT: Ellie is waving her hand.

B. REQUEST: ASK ELLIE WHAT SHE IS DOING.

C. RESPONSE: WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

D. REINFORCEMENT: Ellie answers I AM WAVING MY HAND.

Following each 15 lessons, a unit assessment consisting of 10 items is individually administered to each child. The more complex items within each unit were sampled to assess as economically as possible unit proficiency. Additional reviews for each of the ten items are provided for children not demonstrating adequate proficiency. The review activities fulfill the following design requirements:

1. Reteach the criterions item
2. Provide practice in carrying out the skill in the context of previously taught related items, e.g., criterion item: above, related items: below / in / on / by.

Unit Assessment Cards are provided which include directions for conducting the assessment, a list of materials needed, the ten assessment questions, and a grid for recording individual pupil responses. An accompanying concept card is used in conjunction with the assessment questions and review activities.

A 40 item End of Program Assessment was developed to accompany the LCS Program. An estimate of each pupil's level of language proficiency is obtained as a result of the ordering of behavior and their content in terms of increasing complexity. The End of Program Assessment is more difficult and contains more items than the Placement Aid administered prior to instruction.

Tryout Results: The English Language and Concepts Program for Spanish Speaking Children (LCS) has accomplished the prespecified instructional objectives at a high level of proficiency. The Program proved manageable by teachers and remarkably robust under a wide range of school and classroom conditions as evidenced by assessment score data and teacher comment. 1971-1972 tryout results are discussed in detail in Molina, 1974. Below is a brief summary of results that relate directly to student performance using the built-in assessment instruments.

Placement Aid and End of Program Assessment: Students who were selected by the teachers for participation in LCS were those who could most benefit from English language instruction before entering the basal reading program. In the 1971-1972 tryout children who were not selected for instruction attained a score of 34.42 on a 40 item Placement Aid, 14.28

points higher than the mean raw score of those selected for LCS participation. The 1973-74 End of Program Assessment score data indicate that pupils beginning instruction in Unit I or Unit IX have demonstrated considerable skill attainment in the outcome areas assessed.

Unit Assessments: In the tryouts children have performed at high levels across all units. The highest possible score on each unit was 10. In the tryouts, 10 was the modal value for each unit and the preponderance of pupils scored either 9 or 10.

A follow-up in 1973 of children who participated in the 1971 - 1972 tryout shows that LCS not only accomplishes the program specific oral language and concept outcomes but bears strongly on subsequent pupil success with regular classroom instruction. Children were rated in the following curriculum areas: reading comprehension, oral reading, oral language development, writing skills, math, science, and social studies. Teacher ratings of pupil performance demonstrated that only 3 percent of all the children who had participated in the tryout were unable to cope with regular instruction. In both the LCS instruction and in regular classroom instructional situations, absenteeism proved to be a significant factor in student performance. Both 1972 and 1973 absence rates tended to be regularly associated with depressed performance ratings by the teacher in 1973. Follow-up results are described in detail in Molina, 1975.

In sum, LCS as used in tryouts accomplished the prespecified instructional objectives at a high level of proficiency. The Program has proved manageable by teachers and remarkably robust under a wide range of school and classroom conditions. The SWRL English Language and Concepts Program for Spanish-Speaking Children (LCS) was released by American Book Company in the fall of 1974.

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